

CITY OF NEWTON

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

NEWTON TRAFFIC COUNCIL

THURSDAY, JUNE 19, 2008

Present: David Koses (Chair) Clint Schuckel (Traffic Engineer) Ald. Linsky, Sgt. Norcross (Police) Jerome Grafe (Resident Member) Rosalie Myers (Clerk).

Also Present: Ald. Albright, Ald. Brandel, Ald. Johnson, Ald. Baker.

#TC25-08 ALD. LENNON, GERST, MERRILL AND BAKER requesting traffic
(475-04) study/safety analysis of WAVERLEY AVENUE from WASHINGTON STREET
to WARD STREET. Based on habitual speeding and a concern for pedestrian
safety measures on WAVERLEY AVENUE (especially in the area of Burr Park
and Bigelow Middle School), the analysis should include safety enhancements
and speed controls as a way to mitigate the speeding problem along this corridor
(Ward 1). **HELD ON 4/17/08 TO JUNE MEETING**

ACTION: **APPROVED 4-0-1 (Linsky abstained).**

NOTE: Traffic study results showed that at “Location 1” (near #106 Waverley Avenue),
the daily volume was 8,800 cars traveling at approximately 35 mph. At “Location 2” (near #310
Waverley Avenue), the daily volume of cars was 10,550 travelling at approximately 42 mph and
at “Location 3” (near #391 Waverley Avenue) cars were traveling at 35 mph with a daily volume
of 10,800 vehicles. The recommendations made by the Traffic Engineer at the April 17, 2008
Traffic Council meeting included targeted speed enforcement, conversion of the flashing beacon
at Franklin street into a pedestrian activated warning light, addition of a new pedestrian activated
warning light(s) and addition of edge line striping to define an 11-foot travel lane on each
direction (5’ shoulder). The Traffic Engineer recommended two pedestrian activated warning
signals at this June 19, 2008 Traffic Council meeting.

The Council recommend that pedestrian activated warning signals be installed at the following
two locations: Waverley Avenue & Arlington Street, and Waverley Avenue & Franklin Street, to
be funded through the parking meter receipts reserve fund (For additional detail, see the April
17, 2008 Traffic Council minutes). Note that the two intersections listed above will be added to
a letter to be forwarded to the Mayor to recommend that pedestrian activated warning signals be
installed at the following intersections: Crafts Street & Linwood Avenue; Washington Street &
Harvard Street; and Centre Street near Pleasant Street, as recommended at the April 17, 2008
Traffic Council meeting, item #TC29-08.

#TC12-08 ALD. JOHNSON requesting that one handicapped parking space (recently
(HP16.2) voted to be removed by the Traffic Council on 7/31/07) be reinstated on Albemarle
Road near the Horace Mann Elementary School (Ward 2). [08-31-07 @ 1:15 PM]

ACTION: NO ACTION NECESSARY 5-0

#TC13-08 ALD. JOHNSON requesting that the number of designated handicapped
(HP16.3) parking spaces (approved by the Traffic Council on 7/31/07) be increased to two
 (2) and that said spaces be located directly in front of the Gazebo on Albemarle
 Road, as originally petitioned and approved by the CPC and Board of Aldermen
 (Ward 2). [08-31-07 @ 1:15 PM]

ACTION: APPROVED 3-1-1 (Norcross Opposed, Grafe abstained)

NOTE: Ald. Johnson said that Traffic Council should be consistent with the Board's
action. The Board approved two handicapped parking spaces at the gazebo.

The Traffic Engineer's study included eleven (11) site visits with zero cars parked in handicapped spaces. He observed that handicapped parking spaces are not occupied on a regular basis. Mr. Schuckel told the Council that four handicapped parking spaces are located in the immediate park area, including one in the parking lot, and are, in his opinion, sufficient.

Sgt. Norcross felt there should be a real need for an additional handicapped parking space. David Koses noted that on his frequent visits to the park, he has never seen any vehicle parked in the handicapped parking space near the gazebo, and that there appears to be little evidence that additional handicapped parking spaces are needed. Ald. Johnson said that during evenings and weekends, there does appear to be a need for an additional space.

Margaret Doris, President of the Playground project feels that spaces are needed by both the school and the summer program. She told the Traffic Council that there are physically challenged campers and staffers among summer program participants. Ms. Doris spoke with the Horace Mann principal, who feels these spaces are needed.

Alderman Linsky noted that Traffic Council should be consistent with the Board decision, which approved two handicapped parking spaces nearest the gazebo as part of the overall site plan. David Koses and Clint Schuckel both noted that while there seems to be little evidence that there is a demand for an additional handicapped space at this time, both were willing to vote in favor of the request. While the northbound half of Albemarle Road is heavily used for various purposes, there are an adequate number of parking spaces to meet the parking demand at most times, so the creation of one additional handicapped parking space is supportable.

#TC27-08 ALD JOHNSON, ALBRIGHT AND LINSKY requesting further modification of
 the conditions within the zone approved by the Board, through the Traffic Council
 process, relating to the relocation of Newton North-related parking, including the
 limitation of parking to one side of certain streets for day or evening hours during
 the months of December through March, extending through the duration of the
 new Newton North construction project. (Ward 2) [01-22-08 @ 9:59 AM]

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ACTION: **NO ACTION NECESSARY 5-0**

NOTE: Ald. Linsky said that most people have been satisfied with the changes that have been made. He has seen some problems during snow conditions but, in general, noted extremely positive results. Ald. Johnson noted that there seems to be some problems on Calvin Road.

Clint Schuckel said that roughly 550 permits have been issued overall, and the ability of residents to park near or in front of their homes has been maintained. Isolated hardship cases have been addressed as they have arisen. Additional temporary restrictions have been implemented for special events (e.g. theatre, back to school night). Mr. Schuckel noted that the Newton North Liaison Committee has given positive feedback on this item.

Emily Hess of Calvin Road noted that she felt emergency vehicles could not traverse the street at night during school events. Traffic Council voted to request that the Police Department issue a temporary parking restriction between 4:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m., school days, on the south side of Calvin Road, and on additional streets as needed.

#TC38-08 ALD. BRANDEL on behalf of the Zervas School PTO requesting that **TPR-87, Left turns prohibited**, be amended to prohibit during peak hours for school drop off and pickup a left turn from Beacon Street onto Beethoven Avenue, westbound.(Ward 5) [4-1-08 @5:06 PM]

ACTION: **NO ACTION NECESSARY 4-1 (Koses opposed)**

NOTE: Ald. Brandel addressed the Committee. He said there is a safety situation at this location and was looking for a better way for the blue zone to work.

The Traffic Engineer noted that the left turn volume on Beacon Street westbound is very low, all left turn cars made the turn within one traffic signal cycle, that heavy pedestrian crossings occur at this locations during school drop off/pick up time, and that vehicle traffic delays at the location were caused by high demand of pedestrian crossings. He recommended that no change be made to restrict left turn movement on Beacon Street westbound at Beethoven Avenue.

David Koses noted that while the blue zone at Zervas seems to operate better than many other blue zones in Newton, sometimes cars traveling southbound on Beethoven have difficulty traversing the street during school pick-up times. He encouraged the Traffic Council to consider ways to reduce the number of cars that are traveling southbound on Beethoven during these pick-up hours. Other Traffic Council members noted that a left turn restriction from Beacon Street onto Beethoven would not stop cars from traveling southbound on Beethoven (since cars can still turn right on Beethoven from EB Beacon Street, or continue straight onto Beethoven from Evelyn Road).

Lauren Merz noted that the left turn restriction would preserve the two-way traffic flow and would be beneficial for school bus access. David Koses said that two letters have been received

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on this item. One letter, received from Rebecca Cohan of 1370 Beacon Street, was against the no left turn restriction. A letter from Solomon Friedberg of 31 Beethoven stated that if the proposal was approved, anyone living on Beethoven, Puritan, Chatham, Sagamore or Kingston would find the ability to reach their homes restricted and would cause a great deal of inconvenience. He also hoped that the Council would reject this effort to restrict access.

#TC39-08 ALD. BRANDEL on behalf of the Zervas School PTO requesting a study re the feasibility of extending and or moving the school drop off zone in front of the Zervas School (**TPR-179, School drop off zones.**) [4-1-08 @5:06 PM] (Ward 5)

ACTION: **HELD 4-1 (Norcross opposed).**

NOTE: Ald. Brandel said that the current blue zone ends beyond the point where children go in and out of the school building, so that many parents do not use the northernmost part of the blue zone. Moving the blue zone southward would make it more naturally aligned with the entrance to the school. Sgt. Norcross felt that was not such a good idea as this may result in vehicles parking in the area north of the relocated blue zone.

Lauren Merz said that since Beethoven is only 23 ft wide, parking on both sides causes a problem. She would like to see the “no parking” zone on the west side of Beethoven extend from Beacon Street to Puritan Road. She also noted that a shifted blue zone should also shift parking, to allow parking both in front of and parking behind the relocated blue zone.

The Council voted for a 60-day trial to shift entire blue zone southward so to center the blue zone on the school entrance. Associated parking will be relocated. This item will appear at Traffic Council’s September meeting.

#TC30-08 ALD. DANBERG AND MANSFIELD, on behalf of Lucia Dolan and other neighbors, requesting discussion of parking and safety issues at the corner of MARSHALL and SUMNER STREETS in Newton Centre (Ward 6). [01-24-08 @ 9:12 AM]

ACTION: **HELD 30-day trial 3-2 (Schuckel, Norcross opposed)**

NOTE: Three area residents were present for this discussion. Neighbors said that during snow season, Marshall Street is just wide enough for one car when cars are parked on both sides. School buses sometimes have trouble getting through the street. A resident of 34 Marshall Street noted that cars turning right onto Marshall Street from northbound Sumner Street sometimes cannot see cars coming down the hill toward Sumner Street.

The parking study showed that cars sometimes park on Marshall Street for more than four hours. It appears that some commuters use Marshall Street for all day parking. Mr. Schuckel recommended that parking restrictions match other streets in the area (one side no parking and the other side with 2 hour limit). Residents supported a “no parking” restriction on the south

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side, but did not favor a 2-hour restriction on the north side. The residents in attendance indicated that commuters parking on their street do not trouble them, so long as access is not impaired.

The Council voted a 30-day trial to restrict parking on the south side of Marshall Street (Sumner to Devin). The item will appear at Traffic Council's September meeting, and notices will be resent to residents.

#TC44-08 ALD. DANBERG requesting a discussion re temporary traffic calming on Glen Avenue during the Langley Bridge reconstruction, which is expected to take one year. (Ward 6) [4-23-08 @2:01 PM]

ACTION: **NO ACTION NECESSARY 5-0**

NOTE: All residents of Glen Avenue were notified of this meeting, none were in attendance. Traffic studies show that, due to the temporary closure of the Langley Road Bridge, daily traffic volume has increased from 1,800 per day to 3,300 per day. There was no observed increase in terms of average speed.

One letter was received regarding this petition. The letter was from a resident of 51 Glen Avenue, noted that it has become difficult to exit the driveway, and encouraged Traffic Council to act to slow traffic in some way.

Clint Schuckel said that given the temporary nature of the situation (the closure of the bridge on the MBTA tracks for demolition and reconstruction) there are limited capital improvements that would be cost-effective. Tubes were placed across the road and cars were counted between 24 and 48 hours before the bridge on closed and then about a month after. There was no alternative except to use Glen Avenue as a detour route during the reconstruction. After the bridge reopens it is expected that the pervious traffic conditions will resume.

Daniel Street resident Sean Roche felt that the reason for the limited response was that, while people might be upset about the increased traffic volume, many residents are likely to understand that the traffic changes are temporary and are for the betterment of the City.

Sgt. Norcross said he finds this is a case of volume increase, not speed. He made a motion to NAN this item. The Council voted 5-0 no action necessary.

Respectfully submitted,

David Koses, Chair